



Hello Hamilton County

March 2009

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

"Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found."

~Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Commissioners' Community Tour Meetings May Visit Your Community

The Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) may be coming to visit your community soon! With their new "community tour" approach, they hold an evening meeting out in a local community each month. In February, the Board met in Blue Ash. Upcoming meetings will be held in Forest Park and Harrison.

The BOCC's goal is to hear from community leaders and citizens about what is happening in their communities — and to hear how the BOCC can help! The local municipality sets the meeting agenda and takes the lead in sharing information.

BOCC President David Pepper says he initiated the community tour approach because, "It's far too easy for elected leaders--particularly at busy times--to get insulated and isolated from the communities and citizens they represent. And out-of-touch elected leadership ultimately means poor leadership."

During the Blue Ash meeting, City leaders presented information about Blue Ash's strengths and opportunities, and citizens had a chance to ask questions and share comments with the Commissioners. All are invited to participate in upcoming meetings.



Local Boy Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance to begin the BOCC meeting in Blue Ash.



Blue Ash City Manager David Woltz presented information about the City during the meeting.

BOCC Community Meetings:

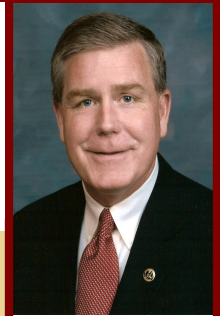
Monday, March 23
Forest Park Municipal Building
1201 West Kemper Rd
Forest Park, OH 45240
7 p.m.

Monday, April 20
Harrison Community Center
- in Council Chambers
300 George St.
Harrison, OH 45030
7 p.m.



Patrick's Perspective

Hamilton County BOCC Implements New Procedures to Alert Community When Offices Close Unexpectedly



**Patrick
Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator**

Spring is just around the corner, but not so long ago we experienced the ice and snow so typical of Cincinnati winters. On January 28, we made the rare decision early one morning to close the offices of the departments under the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

While we got the word out as quickly as we could to employees and the media, the message was delayed a bit because we used some traditional communication methods. Additionally, a local television station erroneously reported that all of Hamilton County government was closed, which was inaccurate. This has prompted us to formalize a procedure for notifying employees and the community when an emergency situation causes various Hamilton County offices to close.

It's very rare that Hamilton County closes offices unexpectedly. But when this occurs, it is critical that the lines of communication work well. We want to ensure that employees know whether they should report to work. And it's important that all constituents who have business with the County understand whether the department that they need is open for business.

To ensure that communication flows smoothly in the future, a new plan is in place. The BOCC is inviting all Hamilton County organizations to participate in the BOCC's new communication system. The system will involve the following:

- The Hamilton County Communications Center's Communicator System will immediately and simultaneously contact all BOCC Department Heads (and designees from offices of other Hamilton County organizations that choose to participate) with a recorded message to notify them of the Board's decision to close.
- The BOCC will alert the community about which Hamilton County organizations are closed, using the County's website and by sending a detailed press release to the media. This press release will include information about closings for the departments under the BOCC's jurisdiction, plus information about any other Hamilton County organizations that choose to participate in the BOCC's communication system and that notify the BOCC that they are closing.

- Employees of participating organizations can call a hotline to hear a recording that lists the Hamilton County organizations that are closing. This should enable employees to find out information more quickly than if they were waiting for a call from their organization.

Of course, employees are responsible for knowing whether they are designated essential or non-essential employees, so they should understand whether they are required to report to work. Employees should contact their supervisors if there is any confusion about when they should report to work.

This centralized communication plan will ensure quick, clear notification for employees and constituents about which Hamilton County offices are open and which are not when unusual circumstances arise. I am pleased that we're able to invite other Hamilton County organizations to join the BOCC's communication effort, and I encourage them to participate. Think Spring!



Commission President David Pepper Delivers State of County Address



Commissioner Pepper and members of the Cincinnati Rotary Club
upon completion of the State of the County Address

On February 19th, Hamilton County Commission President David Pepper delivered an inspiring State of the County Address to over 300 people. The audience included members of the Cincinnati Rotary Club, who hosted the event, and Hamilton County elected officials, city of Cincinnati Council members, Township Trustees, state senators, state representatives, and a Congressman.

Pepper said, "I come today to give an accounting of where our great County stands. My aim is to begin an annual tradition — so every year, the citizens of this County understand where we've been and where we're going, and how we're going to get there."

Pepper outlined a plan for renewal that he believes can put the County "on a stronger, more competitive footing than we have been before." The plan included three major components.

Economic Recovery Plan

Pepper's Economic Recovery Plan includes providing immediate relief for working families with actions like fighting foreclosures and reducing families' costs. Also key is job creation, which includes connecting residents to the jobs. Pepper cited the Super Jobs Center as one example of a city, county and private sector partnership that can help. Pepper said investments and infrastructure are another important component of economic recovery.

Public Safety

Pepper said, "Public safety is our second major challenge; but also presents an opportunity to do better than before." He noted, "public safety is by far our largest area of support in our budget, and it always will be" and that "We can't just be tough on crime. We've got to be 'smart on crime' — making the wise

investments that reduce crime in the first place." Pepper provided examples of issues the County is working on "to reduce jail overcrowding and to run a smarter, more cost effective system."

Accountable Government

Pepper emphasized the importance of accountability, saying, "We must make county government accountable, innovative, and cost-effective in everything we do." He cited several broad initiatives for 2009, including shared services, working together to achieve regional goals, and a Professionalism and Ethics Initiative.

To see the full text of Commissioner Pepper's State of the County Address, please visit this link:

[http://
www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/
hc_pdfs/2009StateOfTheCounty.
pdf](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/hc_pdfs/2009StateOfTheCounty.pdf)



Commissioner Hartmann Meets with Federal Congressional Delegation in Washington D.C.



Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann met with southwest Ohio's federal Congressional delegation in Washington D.C. on March 3rd. The trip was sponsored by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

The one day trip included meetings with U.S. Senators George Voinovich and Sherrod Brown, as well as with U.S. Representatives Jean Schmidt and Steve Driehaus.

In addition to our regional economic development needs, the group updated legislators on The Banks project. Priority transportation projects for the region including the Brent Spence Bridge, the Ancor Connector and the Eastern Corridor, were also included in the delegation discussions.

Commissioner Hartmann was joined on the trip by 33 other representatives from the Chamber and regional companies, including Cintas, Duke, Cincinnati Bell, Convergys, the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

J. Rita McNeil, Vice President of Government

Affairs at The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, said, "We are pleased to have Hamilton County Commissioner Hartmann join us as we advocate for the region to members of Congress. It's important to have the voice of our local government officials among our group to further demonstrate our alignment and collaboration on strategic initiatives that have the greatest impact for our entire region."

Commissioner Hartmann said, "I traveled to Capitol Hill with the Chamber at my own expense and was proud to represent Hamilton County. This was a great group to spend a day with advocating for southwest Ohio. Working together cooperatively as a region goes a long way to ensure that our federal representatives understand our concerns and priorities. During our discussion, I again urged our legislators to make common sense decisions that focus on the development, revitalization and growth of our local economy in all they do."



Hamilton County Residents Save Money Using Prescription Drug Discount Card

Prescription Drug Discount Cards are Available at these locations:

- Branches of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- YMCA Branches
- Many social services agencies, such as the FreeStore Foodbank and Talbert House
- Hamilton County Job and Family Services Offices

Hamilton County residents are quickly seeing the benefits of the free Hamilton County prescription discount card. The card became available January 22nd, and within just nine days — by the end of January — 187 County residents had used the card to receive discounts on 276 prescriptions. Their average savings was \$10.14 per prescription. Overall, in just nine days, residents saved \$2,800 total on prescription drug costs. That's \$2,800 that Hamilton County residents can spend on other things that they need.

If you'd like to get a free Prescription Drug Discount Card to use to defray the cost of prescription drugs that are not covered by insurance, pick one up today at any of the locations listed on the left.

For more information, please call the Hamilton County Rx hotline at 946-1010 or visit this link: <http://www.hamiltoncountyrx.com>



Win Tickets to Enjoy a Reds Game from the County Suite at the Great American Ball Park

It's that time of year again! Reds fans are counting down the days until the April 6th home opener, and Hamilton County officials are planning the raffles that will give tickets to Hamilton County citizens.

If you would like to win tickets to enjoy a game from the Hamilton County suite, you've got plenty of chances! The county will hold monthly drawings throughout the season. You only need to enter once, and your entry will be kept in the hopper for each drawing through the season. Winners will receive two tickets and will enjoy complimentary food and soft drinks while in the county's suite.



The first drawing will take place on Wednesday, March 18th immediately following the Commissioners' public meeting. The drawing is open to Hamilton County residents only, and one entry per resident is accepted. Winners will be notified by phone and just need to respond within 48 hours of the drawing.

[Click here if you want to enter your name for the drawing](#)

Or

Send a postcard to:

- Reds Drawings
- c/o Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
- 138 East Court Street, Room 603
- Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Enter today, so you have chances to win all season! Good luck, and Go Reds!

What should we call "The Banks?" Vote Today!

You've heard of "The Artist Formerly Known As Prince?" Soon, our community may have "A Place Formerly Known As The Banks."

The developers of the Banks Project invite you to help decide what the area should be called.

To vote, please visit this link:

[http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey-intro.zgi?
p=WEB228VKXSJYW](http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB228VKXSJYW)





HCJFS Director Moira Weir Introduces New Blog

Hamilton County Job and Family Services Director Moira Weir began using a new communication format in February, with the "Director's Blog." The blog's page describes its purpose as, "ideas, plans, and musings from Director Moira Weir."

Weir explains, "This is in line with my desire from day one as director that we be as open and accountable as possible about what is going on at the agency. We're already doing live chats with consumers, a monthly newsletter, audio podcasts, Youtube videos, Facebook and Twitter announcements -- we are doing everything we can to keep an open line of communication with the hundreds

of thousands of people we help each year."

So far, Weir's blog has informed readers about the live chats with program experts that JFS hosts, about recommendations sent to the anti-poverty task force, and she has encouraged everyone to thank a social worker in March, which is Professional Social Worker month.

You can check out The Director's Blog at this link:
<http://hcjfs.wordpress.com/>



New County Website Launched to Help Families Save Money and Seek Economic Opportunity

On February 19th, Hamilton County launched a new website aimed at helping working families. And people are taking notice! In less than two weeks since the website's launch, the site has been viewed over 850 times.

As the site says, "Hamilton County wants to help. Help reduce costs on everyday family needs like prescription drugs and child care, so you have more money in your pocket. Help your family avoid a foreclosure. And help connect you to job opportunities and job training. Use this website to help save money and seek economic opportunity at a tough time."

Commission President David Pepper introduced the website during his State of the County address, saying, "If our families can't make ends

meet, this economy won't rebound. Which means everything we can do to lower the costs of the bare essentials is critical." Pepper talked about efforts to lower costs and provide economic opportunity and noted that the new website "provides citizens easy access to all of these opportunities and tells them how to take advantage of all of them."

For example, people who visit the site can select options such as connect to jobs/training, reduce child medical costs, reduce prescription drug costs, reduce food costs, avoid a foreclosure, reduce energy/gas costs, and free tax preparation. You can visit the site at this link:

www.hamiltoncountyfamilies.com





Hamilton County Leaders are Leading Women 2009 Honorees

The Leading Women of Greater Cincinnati organization is recognizing a Hamilton County employee and an Elected Official as Leading Women 2009 Honorees.

The Honorable Cheryl D. Grant, Municipal Court Judge, is the Judicial Honoree. Bernice Walker, Esq., Hamilton County's Small Business Development Director, is the Public Service/Government Honoree.

The Leading Women of Greater Cincinnati provides the awards to honor women who, through leadership and community service, have become role models and mentors to other women in the Greater Cincinnati area. They celebrated and honored the women at a luncheon, which was held on March 4th.

Congratulations to Bernice Walker and Judge Cheryl D. Grant!



Bernice Walker, Director of Small Business Development



Melissa Graves,
Section Chief
JFS Child Care

Hamilton County Job and Family Services' Child Care Division and Cincinnati State Offer Program To Enhance Child Care Quality and Increase Incomes

Hamilton County's Job and Family Services' (JFS) Child Care Department will offer a convenient, low-cost way for its certified home care providers to earn accreditation and Child Development Associate certification under a new program presented through Cincinnati State. Over 1,000 home providers could participate in early-childhood education classes offered through the program, expected to start this spring.

A Home Provider is a someone who provides care in their home

for up to six JFS child care placements. JFS certifies their homes for health and safety requirements that are defined in the Ohio Administrative Code's rules and regulations. Ohio pays up to 5 percent more in state reimbursement to professional home care providers who obtain and maintain National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYCE) accreditation.

"This program will increase the quality of care for the children as well as the income of providers," said Melissa Graves, Child Care Section Chief. "Our providers will get credentials, which allow them to earn a higher percent-

age of reimbursement money, and more skills for helping our children."

"We have a handful of accredited providers in Hamilton County," Graves said. "Many have expressed interest, but need some help in getting there. We hope this will give them the hand they need to get started."

Cincinnati State will market the program to providers. Classes will be available in multiple locations in the evenings, weekends and online. "They're watching kids all day long," Graves said. "We're trying to make it as easy to do as possible for them."



Hamilton County's Regional Planning Staff Helps Educate UC Planning Students



Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Todd Kinskey and Russ Sparks, Zoning Services Administrator, share information with UC Planning Students.

In February, the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) helped UC planning students with their education. They hosted a meeting with UC's "Local Planning Resources" class, which introduces first year planning students to resources they will need throughout their planning education and career.

Executive Director Todd Kinskey says, "The Hamilton County RPC represents a significant resource in the region for information and data, so we're happy to host students and introduce them to the various aspects of our organization and to discuss how we may be able to assist them during their academic endeavors."

Instructor Sam McKinley says, "I was very pleased with our welcome from the RPC and

with the information they shared. The trip gave them a good overview of the structure of planning in Hamilton County."

It's not surprising that McKinley and his students were pleased with the visit. The RPC is an award-winning Hamilton County organization, and they have a reputation for providing outstanding customer service. (It's true! You can check out some of their customer kudos at this link:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hcrpc/kudos.asp>

Although RPC staff is always happy to help, Kinskey says, "It's especially easy to get staff volunteers for this annual visit, because we have so many UC School of Planning graduates on our staff. It's interesting to talk with a new batch of students each year and reminisce a little."



Find Great Items and Bargains On the Hamilton County Surplus Auction!

In March, you can bid on a variety of great items using the Hamilton County Surplus Auction, including:

- Restaurant-type tables.
- Colorful chairs for children and a great wooden bookcase
- Gateway Pentium 4 Desktop Computers.

This is just a small sample of what's available.
You can often purchase vehicles, jewelry, and office equipment using the Surplus auction.



See what kind of items and bargains you can find
using the county's online public auction!

www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com



Hamilton County Drop-Off Programs Begin in March

With spring on the way, now is the time to start cleaning up around the house and in the yard. To help you dispose of all that extra waste responsibly, the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District (District) will start up its free annual Household Hazardous Waste and Yardwaste drop-off programs later this month.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program

Hamilton County residents can drop off qualifying household hazardous waste (pesticides, solvents, prescription medication, etc.) at the District's two collection sites. Proof of residency such as a driver's license or utility bill is required, and residents are encouraged to review the list of acceptable items prior to visiting the drop-off site. Commercial waste is prohibited.

March 14 - November 14, 2009

Environmental Enterprises, Inc.

4600 Spring Grove Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45232
Tuesdays: 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturdays: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Environmental Enterprises, Inc.

10163 Cincinnati-Dayton Road
Cincinnati, OH 45241
Wednesdays: 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Sites closed 4/11, 5/23, 7/4, 9/5.

**Questions?
Please call**

**The Household Hazardous Waste Hotline
946-7700.**



Yardwaste Drop-off Program

Hamilton County residents can drop off bundled yardwaste of the appropriate length and weight at any of the District's three collection sites. Proof of residency such as a driver's license or utility bill is required. Yardwaste in commercial vehicles or from commercial establishments is prohibited. Residents are encouraged to view the yardwaste drop-off guidelines before visiting the site.

March 28 - November 22, 2009

North (Colerain Township):

Rumpke Landfill
3800 Struble Rd, Cincinnati OH 45251
Saturdays and Sundays: 11:30 a.m.—5 p.m.

East (Anderson Township):

Bzak Landscaping
3295 Turpin Lane, Cincinnati OH 45244
Mondays—Fridays: 7:30 a.m.—6 p.m.
Saturdays and Sundays: 11:30 a.m.—5 p.m.

West (Green Township):

Kuliga Park
6717 Bridgetown Road, Cincinnati OH 45248
Saturdays and Sundays: 11:30 a.m.—5 p.m.

Sites closed 4/12, 5/25, 7/4, 9/7.

**Questions?
Please call**

**The Composting and Yardwaste Hotline
946-7755.**

To read guidelines for the Household Hazardous Waste and Yardwaste Collection Programs,
visit www.hamiltoncountyclecylces.org



Caring Families are Needed!



Learshai **Born June 1998**

Smiling from ear to ear, Learshai practically shivers with excitement when she hears that it's time to go to school. She is absolutely exuberant to learn and enjoys spending time with her teachers and classmates.

Of all her toys, the ones with sound are Learshai's favorites. And when she's not playing with her toys, she loves to be in the bathtub!

This is a little girl who craves human touch. Whether it's having her face rubbed or her hair twirled and braided, you can't wipe the happy smile off her face when she's getting this kind of attention.

A calm family would be a good fit for Learshai. She needs lots of attention and assistance, but the family that adopts her will be rewarded with her grinning face every single day.

**To learn more about Learshai and others available for adoption,
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.**



Please post "Hello Hamilton County," so everyone can see what's going on!

Hello Hamilton County is published monthly. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County's website. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus.

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